# A Study of the Use of Movies for Oral Commentaries in the Malaysian ESL Classroom

Nurul Nadiah Rasdi, Norhartini Aripin, and Noor Hanim Rahmat

*Abstract*—The teaching of oral commentaries in the ESL classroom can be done in many ways. Traditionally, students are asked to prepare interesting titles for their oral presentation, and many may find it difficult to decide on their presentation titles. The use of movies in oral commentary in the ESL classroom can be beneficial to the students in numerous of ways. Movies help learners to focus on the content as well as meaning, thus making the students intrinsically motivated. Besides being a good example of authentic material, movies motivate students towards learning. Activities used to incorporate the use of movies also allow constructivist learning to take place. This quantitative study reports the survey conducted on students who have undergone a semester of using movies in the ESL classroom to make oral commentaries. Results of the study will have interesting implications towards the use of movies for students' oral presentation.

*Keywords*—Authentic, constructivism, motivation, movies, oral commentary

## I. INTRODUCTION

MOVIES have long entered the ESL classroom. Teachers have used movies for students to look at how spoken language is used. According to the Input Hypothesis (Krashen, 1985), learners progress when they comprehend language input slightly more advanced than their current level. Watching language used in the movies facilitate language learning. Students get the opportunity to improve their pronunciation of certain words as they listen to the conversation in the movies.

Cognitively, the use of movies in the ESL classroom complies with the Cognitive Approach proposed by Crawford (2004) who said when it comes to adding content to their writing (preparing for their oral commentary), students need to retrieve relevant information from various sources (as opposed to memory). Students would find it less stressful to retrieve information about the contents of the movie for oral presentation

In addition to that, the use of movies complies with the criteria of authenticity in the class. Crawford (2004) emphasized the need for authenticity in the ESL classroom

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through her Strategic Approach in ESL classroom. She added that in the approach, prior knowledge of the students is taken into consideration so that students can relate what they are going to learn to what they have learnt. Grabe and Kaplan (1996) also emphasized the need for authenticity in the ESL classroom so that students can tie their lessons to a social purpose.

## II. RESEARCH QUESTION

This research is done based on the following questions:
- How does the use of movies influence oral presentation in the ESL classroom?
- How does the use of movies in oral presentation influence students' motivation?
- How is the use of movies in oral presentation considered authentic?
- How is constructivism incorporated in the use of movies in oral presentation?

## III. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

### A. Oral Presentation in the ESL Classroom

Oral presentation in the ESL classroom helps to eliminate monotony in the classroom. From reading activities to writing activities, oral presentation helps to improve students' listening (Haber, 2010) and spoken skills. Brown (2001) listed several principles for designing speaking techniques and they are:

(1) Use techniques that cover spectrum learner needs, from language-based focus on accuracy to message – based focus on interaction, meaning and fluency
(2) Provide intrinsically motivating techniques
(3) Encourage the use of authentic language in meaningful contexts
(4) Provide appropriate feedback and correction
(5) Capitalize on the natural link between speaking and listening
(6) Give students opportunities to initiate oral communication
(7) Encourage development of speaking strategies

When prepared well, oral presentation helps develop students' confidence towards using the language. The benefits of oral presentation go beyond the activity itself. Park and Lee (2001) felt that oral presentation improves students' situational and communication confidence. This means if students were not very confident using spoken English, oral presentation

gave them situational confidence as they prepared what they wanted to say-some even memorized the presentation to appear fluent. When they were asked about what they had presented, chances are they may become better equipped to answer question pertaining to the content of their presentation as they had prepared beforehand, hence giving them some form of confidence to speak. Many studies have reported its benefits to students. Tuncay (2014) found that oral presentations improve performance and receptive skills as well. For example, students present and then they listen to their friends' presentation. He also felt that oral presentation activities in the classroom improve students' fluency in using the language.
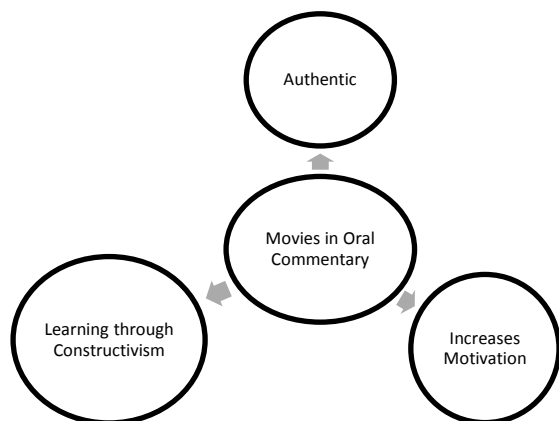
### B. Theoretical Foundation



Fig. 1 Theoretical foundation of the study

Figure 1 shows the theoretical foundation of the study and is rooted from several theories language learning. Bringing in movies in the classroom for oral commentaries is in accordance with the theory by Tuncay (2014) who supported the use of movies as it allow students to use the language in a less stressful environment. For students to find learning meaningful and relevant to their real life experiences, the activities need to be authentic (Mersita, 2013; Noor Hanim, 2011). Finally, according to Thanasoulas (2002), talking about movies can bring about a pleasant and supportive atmosphere in the ESL classroom.

### C. Motivation

Past studies have shown movies make students become motivated in the ESL classroom. Thanasoulas (2002) listed some motivational conditions for the ESL classroom and they are (a) appropriate teacher behaviour and good teacher-student rapport, (b) pleasant and supportive classroom atmosphere and also (c) cohesive group characterized by appropriate norms. Discussion about movies watched in the classroom help break rigid classroom-textbook structure into a pleasant and fun environment. This will in turn generate students' motivation towards learning more. When students are motivated to learn, their confidence level will increase.

Some past studies have also shown that movies benefitted both teachers and students. The research by Merita (2013)

reported on teachers' and students' perception on using movies in the classroom. According to her, movies have a positive effect on student's language process. Movies helped students to become active participants in the classroom activities. Movies also helped to enhance the interaction among students in class. They improve learners' communicative competence and provided them with more opportunities to use English. On the other hand, students perceive using movies as a new and pleasant experience. They become motivated to talk about real-life situations than follow activities in the textbook. They also saw movies as an opportunity for them to improve their English vocabulary and more chances to practice English during discussions about movies that they liked.

### C. Authentic

In order for the lessons to be meaningful, the activities need to be authentic. According to Tuncay (2014), movies present real language that is used in authentic, cultural settings. Students exposed to language used in its natural form. Movies too relate to the students' real life, and presenting real issues (Noor Hanim, 2013). When students see the link between classroom and the outside world, lessons become meaningful. This will then make the curriculum relevant for the students (Thanasoulas, 2002).

### E. Constructivism

Constructivism is the knowledge obtained when learning involves the interaction of experience and ideas. Using movies allow students to create personal knowledge in a particular task environment (Constructivism Paradigm, 2004). Usually the choice of movies is determined by the students-they choose movies they like. The research by Merita (2013) revealed that after watching the movies, students were motivated to read simplified reader of the story. They were enthusiastic to participate in group discussions. They were also interested to discuss and analyze the characters and had clearer picture of events in the discussions.

## IV. METHODOLOGY

### A. Research Design

Research design of this study is a survey descriptive research. A survey in the form of a written questionnaire is administered to elicit information.

### B. Sample

For this study, the sampling technique that is used is simple random sampling. A total of 189 diploma students were selected to answer questions regarding the intended area of the study.

### C. Instrumentation

The instrument used in this study is a set of questionnaire which contains six sections; Section A, Section B, Section C, Section D, Section E and Section F. The demographic profiles of the samples were obtained from Section A of the survey containing two regarded items on the personal view of the

subject. Meanwhile Section B comprises of five items on oral presentation and Section C contains five items on the movies. As for Section D, E and F, 14 items have been allocated and tabled into three main area; Motivation (Q11, Q12, Q13, Q14, Q15), Authentic (Q16, Q17, Q18, Q19, Q20) and Constructivism (Q21, Q22, Q23, Q24). All the items are managed in a table with the three scales; Never, Sometimes and Always.

In collecting the required data, some procedures have been performed in order to have a trouble-free process. Firstly, the documented questionnaires were distributed to the participants after they had oral commentaries assessment using the movies. All respondents were asked to answer the questionnaire in their class during their English Language class. The answering session takes approximately 30 minutes. All the gathered data are then analyzed using SPSS 20.0.

### D. Data Analysis

The gathered data for all the research questions are analyzed in SPSS 20.0 using descriptive analysis, specifically percentage.

### V. FINDINGS

### A. Demographic Profile

In total, 189 students consisting of 91 male students (48%) and 98 female students (52%) were involved in the study. From these students, 22 students are from the Business Management (12%), 138 students are from the Civil Engineering course (73%) and 29 students are from the Chemical Engineering course (15%).
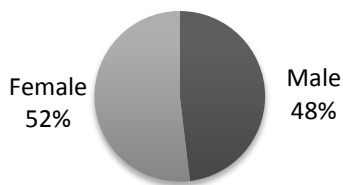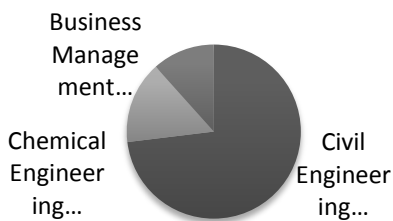


Fig. 2-Gender



Fig. 3 Faculty

### B. Oral Presentation and Movies

The students' responses on oral presentation are shown in Fig. 4. Students will feel anxious to present. When they see their friend presenting, their confidence level increases because they already see how other people presented and they

learn from it, and apply to their own presentation. It can be seen from the figure where students strongly feel that they can gain experience when they watch their friends presenting, 67.7%. This is in accordance with Dass and Ferguson (2012) who state that the respondents viewed peer discourse positively because it provided the opportunity to learn and seek clarification from others. Students also feel confident to present when they have the points prepared beforehand, 46.6%. Preparation is crucial because without preparation students will not know what to present and this will make their confidence level decrease. They may able be to answer about what they had presented because they had prepared beforehand, hence giving them some form of confidence to speak (Park and Lee, 2001).
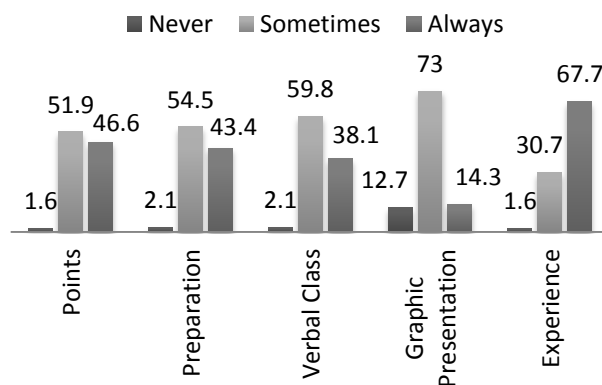


Fig. 4 Oral presentation

Fig. 5 depicts the results on movies. It is found out that students understood the plot better when they had to prepare for their presentation, 62.4%. They also feel oral presentation becomes fun when they use movies as the content, 55%. It can be inferred that students understand the plot better when movies are used and they enjoy themselves in the process. Past studies has also shown that using movies makes learning less stressful and fun in the ESL classroom (Thanasoulas, 2002; Merita, 2013; & Tuncay, 2014).
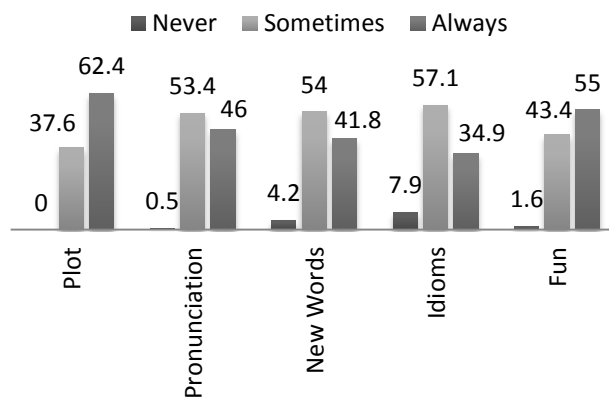


Fig. 5 Movies

### C. Motivation

Students' responses on motivation are illustrated in Fig. 6. The statement that receives the highest percentage, 64.6%

among the five statements is student feel using movies for oral presentation makes preparation fun. Students also look forward to watch their friends presenting, 58.2% and this helps to improve their receptive skills as well (Tuncay, 2014). It can be concluded from this study that they are motivated to prepare for the oral presentation and watch their friend's presentation because movies are used. The findings of this study are in accordance with the research by Park and Lee (2001) who also felt that the benefits of oral presentation go well beyond the presentation. Students gain confidence to speak in the target language.
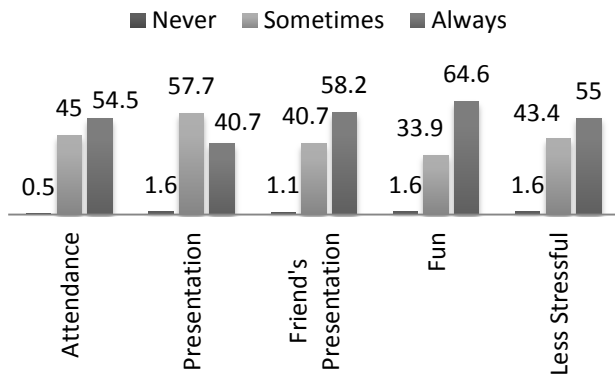


Fig. 6 Motivation

### D. Authentic

The findings on authentic are revealed in Fig. 7. Using movies give the students more insight about the social values as indicated by the highest percentage; 46.6%. It is not effective to tell or lecture people on social values. It is better to show the social values and the best way is through movies. This finding is in accordance with the study by Tuncay (2014) who felt that movies present real language in authentic, cultural setting. The students will learn about social values indirectly through movies. The students also like it that they can choose movie they like and present it in class, 46%. To them, they are in-charge of their own learning and it is learner centred. This is also proven in the research by Noor Hanim (2013) and Thanasoulas (2002) who agreed that students felt more confident if they were allowed to take charge of their own learning.
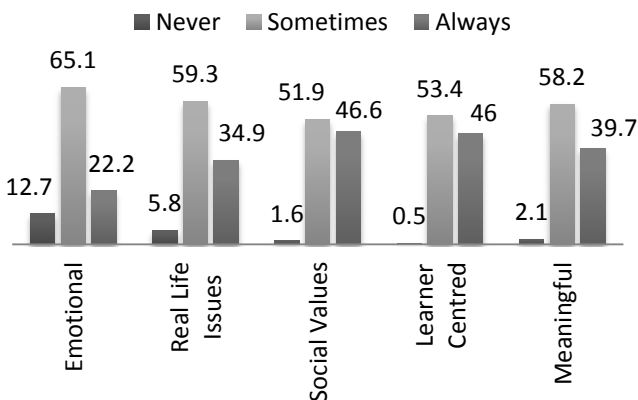


Fig. 7 Authentic

### E. Constructivism

Fig. 8 portrays the results on constructivism. It is shown that students find themselves understand the movie better while preparing for the presentation, 62.4%. As the students need to present their oral presentation to other people, they need to understand it first. To better understand it, preparation will help them to fulfil the aim. They also understand better when focusing on issues from the movie, 51.3%. By focusing on issues in the movie, the students will understand the message that the movie delivered. Merita (2013) also revealed that the preparation helped students understand the issues better-from their point of view.
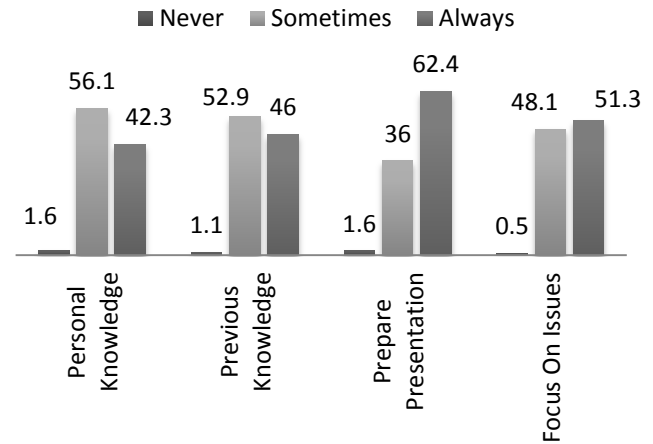


Fig. 8 Constructivism
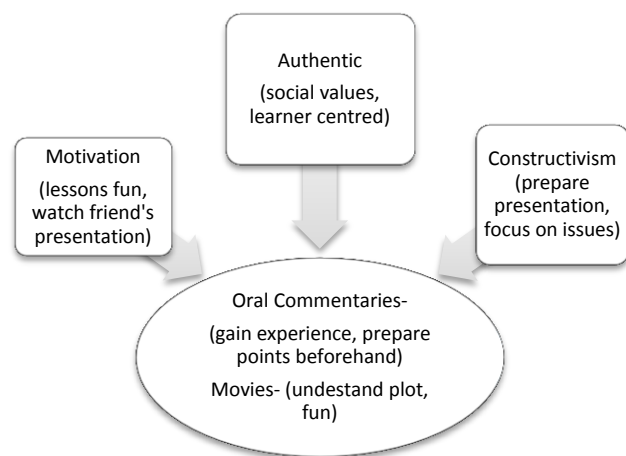
## VI. CONCLUSION

### A. Summary of Findings



Fig. 9 Summary of findings

Fig. 9 above summarizes the findings for this research. Using movies for oral commentaries have made the students gain valuable experience preparing for the commentary when watching their friends present. The experience of preparing for the presentation has also made them understand the movies better and reported having fun in the process. This finding is similar to that by Mersita (2013) who found that movies

allowed the students more opportunities to participate in the class discussion as they have content knowledge-the movie. Students were more receptive of watching their friend's presentation, thus gaining valuable insight although they may still feel not confident to present in the target language.

As for motivation in using movies in oral presentation, students claimed that they enjoyed the lessons about the movie. They look forward to watch their friend's presentation. Thanasoulas (2002) also found that using movies in the ESL classroom improved students' motivation towards learning. Learning becomes fun because they were allowed to talk about things that are familiar to them-movies!

Movies were seen as authentic material for the students especially when they were allowed to choose the movies, and thus the learning becomes learner centred. They also can decide on the issues presented in the movies that are current issues they were familiar with. Tuncay (2014) and Noor Hanim (2013) also revealed that when students are allowed to use materials that are socially familiar, the content becomes familiar to them and they will be able to understand the authenticity of the lesson.

Finally, students find themselves understand the movie better while preparing for the presentation. They also understand better when focusing on issues from the movie. They can share and compare ideas as well as expand knowledge when they are discussing with their friends about the movie (Dass & Ferguson, 2012). Therefore, they were able to construct the information and present effectively

### B. Pedagogical Implication

Movies have been successfully used to teach different ESL skills. Many students may find oral presentations very stressful, especially if the content is not really of their interest of choice. Using movies as the content of the presentation could make oral presentation preparation as fun as the actual presentation. Students may even look forward to watching their friends present as well.

### C. Suggestion for Future Research

Future research could look into the genre that students prefer, or even genres that are easier for oral commentaries. It is also interesting to conduct a research to compare students' attitude and performance in the traditional oral presentation of academic issues with that of the oral commentaries of movies.

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